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JANE AUSTEN

Pride and Prejudice





about the author

The daughter of a village preacher, Jane Austen was born in December, 1775, in the county of Hampshire, England. She received her early education at home from her father, although she was sent for a brief time to a boarding school not far away. During her spare time she enjoyed reading, country walks, and good conversation.

As one of seven children, Jane found most of her entertainment at home. Her earliest writings, in fact, were stories and plays she had created for her family's enjoyment. By the time she was twenty she had begun two novels, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*. Among her other works, written later in her life, were *Northanger Abbey*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Emma*.

All of Jane Austen's novels deal with the manners and social life of upper-class Englishmen during the eighteenth century. Although there is little adventure in any of them, critics say they are among the most interesting works of English fiction because they present a realistic picture of family life at that time. Frequently ill during her later years, Jane Austen died in 1817 at the age of forty-two.

Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen



Mr. Bingley



Mr. Darcy



Elizabeth Bennet



Jane Bennet



Mrs. Bennet

Pride and Prejudice

In England, at the time of our story, marriage was the only accepted way of life for young women without much money. This was so even if they were unhappy about it.



The Bennets had five daughters and little money. The business of Mrs. Bennet's life was to get her daughters married.

POCKET CLASSICS



Pride and Prejudice

Soon Mr. Bennet called on Mr. Bingley. A few days later, Mr. Bingley visited the Bennets.

I hear there is to be a dance soon?

Yes, indeed. And you will be very welcome.



Mr. Bingley had heard of the five beautiful Bennet daughters. He did not see them, but they saw him.

I think he's handsome. What a beautiful blue coat!



And what a handsome black horse!

POCKET CLASSICS

Soon after, Mrs. Bennet talked to her friend, Lady Lucas.

I invited Mr. Bingley to dinner, but he had to go to London.



Isn't he going to settle down at Netherfield?

Oh, yes. I think he went to invite guests for our dance! Twelve ladies and seven men, I heard!



Then the night of the dance arrived.

Who are those people?

Mr. Bingley's sister, Mrs. Hurst and her husband. And his unmarried sister. How nice they look!

And Mr. Darcy. He's even better looking than Mr. Bingley . . . and much richer, they say!



Pride and Prejudice

Mr. Bingley soon met everyone and danced every dance.

*He danced with
Charlotte Lucas.*



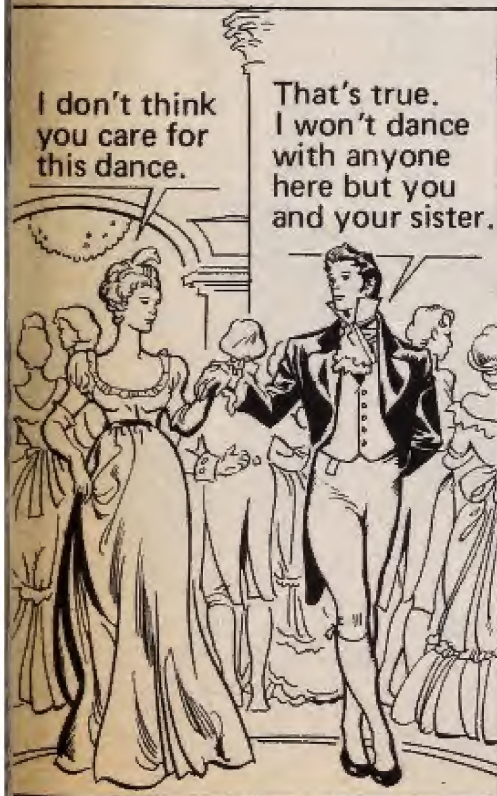
*He danced with
Elizabeth Bennet.*



*He danced most of
all with Jane.*



*There were not enough men,
but Darcy danced only twice—
with the Bingley ladies.*



And he talked only with his friends.



POCKET CLASSICS



Pride and Prejudice

After the dance, Jane and Elizabeth talked about what had happened.

I admire Mr. Bingley very much! He is smart, lively, and very funny!

And handsome, too!



I was surprised that he asked me to dance so often! I did not expect such a compliment.

And why not? He could not help seeing that you were five times prettier than anyone else!



Dear Lizzy!

And he *is* very nice—even though you find *everyone* good and never speak badly of anyone!



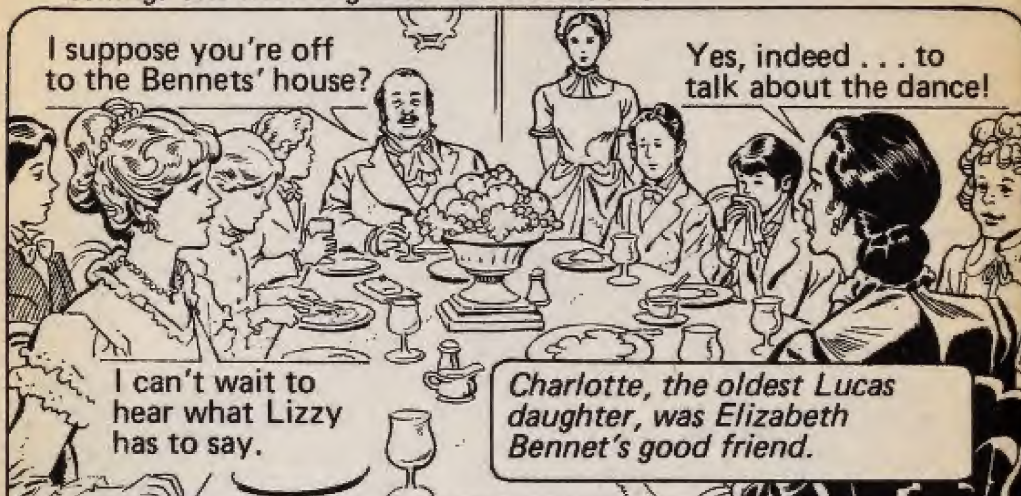
And do you like his sisters too? I didn't like them at all!

Not at first, but they are very charming to talk with.



POCKET CLASSICS

The Lucases were neighbors and close friends of the Bennets. Sir William had been knighted after making his money in selling. The morning after the dance. . . .



Pride and Prejudice

The subject changed to Mr. Darcy.

I never saw such a rude man! He refused to dance with Elizabeth!

Still—he is good looking and rich!



He almost has a *right* to be proud.

True! And I could easily forgive *his* pride if he had not hurt mine!



Soon the Bennet ladies and the Bingley ladies visited each other. And Mr. Bingley and Jane met at several evening parties.



Everyone could see that Mr. Bingley was falling in love.

POCKET CLASSICS

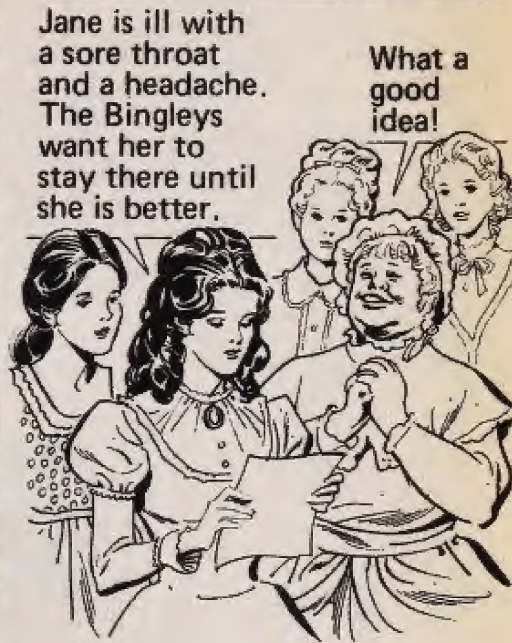


Pride and Prejudice

Jane left on horseback. Soon after, it rained.



After a stormy night, a servant brought a note from Jane.



If your daughter dies, you will be happy knowing that it was your plan to chase Mr. Bingley.



POCKET CLASSICS

How silly, in all this mud! You will be so dirty when you get there!

That doesn't matter. I want to see Jane.



After a three-mile walk across the fields, Elizabeth arrived at Netherfield.

I am dirty. They'll have to understand!



She was brought into the breakfast room.

You walked here? In such weather?

So early in the day? By yourself?

Yes, indeed. I was worried about Jane.



Good for you!

Pride and Prejudice

Elizabeth was taken up to Jane's room. She found her with a headache, a fever, and a sore throat.

Lizzy! I am so glad to see you! Everyone here has been so kind!

My dear, you should be treated well.

Elizabeth stayed with Jane during the day. Late in the afternoon, she prepared to leave.

Dear Jane, I must start for home.

Oh, Lizzy! I wish you could stay with me!

Well, of course . . . if that is what dear Jane wants . . . you must stay.

A servant went to the Bennet house to bring back clothes for Elizabeth. Meanwhile, dinner was served.

I admire your sister so much! I hope she'll feel better soon!

You and your sisters have cared for her so kindly!

POCKET CLASSICS

When dinner was over, Elizabeth returned at once to Jane's room. As soon as she left, the ladies began to talk about her.

Well! How rude she is! No small talk, no style, no taste. . . .

And the way she looked this morning! Her petticoat was covered with mud. . . .

I thought she looked very well. And she showed a pleasing love for her sister!



Jane Bennet is a dear, sweet girl. I wish she could marry someone rich. But with her family, there's not a chance.

Her mother and father have no money. And her uncle is a lawyer!

It doesn't make her less beautiful!

Pride and Prejudice



POCKET CLASSICS

In a few days Jane felt much better. On Sunday she wanted to go home with Elizabeth.



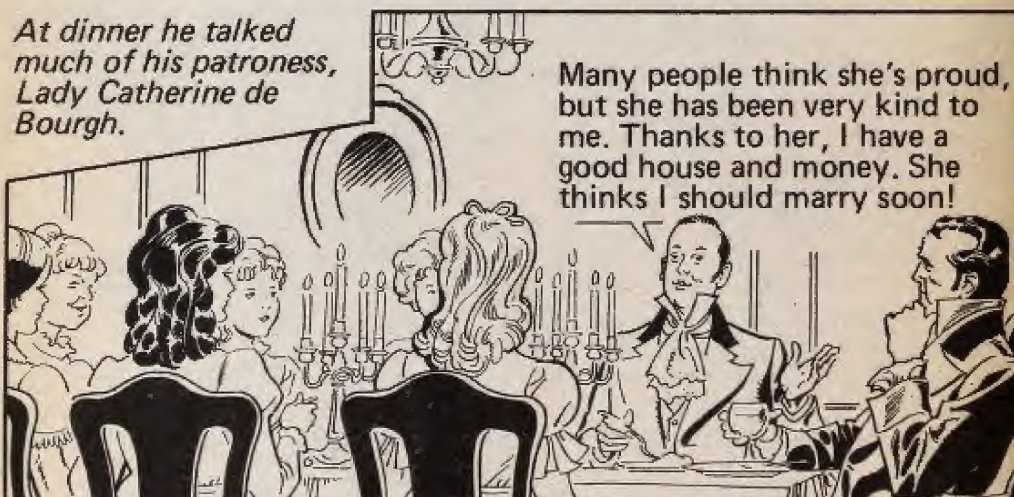
At breakfast the next day, Mr. Bennet read a letter from his cousin, William Collins. According to the law, Mr. Collins would someday inherit all of Mr. Bennet's money.



Pride and Prejudice



POCKET CLASSICS



Pride and Prejudice

That afternoon the girls and Mr. Collins walked to Meryton.

Look! Mr. Denny and a stranger!

How handsome he is! If he were a soldier he would be just right!

Soon the two groups met.

BONNETS

I would like you to meet Mr. Wickham. He is going to be a soldier!

As they talked, two horsemen drew near.

Miss Bennet! I was just on my way to ask about your health!

How good of you! I am well, as you can see.

POCKET CLASSICS



Darcy and Wickham barely spoke. Then Darcy rode on.



The next night the Philipses gave a party. The Bennet girls were there. So were many army officers.



Card tables were set up. Some of the guests played whist. But Mr. Wickham talked to Elizabeth.



Pride and Prejudice

In this neighborhood everyone dislikes the way he acts!



I am surprised! Most people like Darcy because he is rich and important.

We grew up together. My father worked for his. In his will, Darcy's father left me the best church that he had. I would have become a minister.



But when the job was open, Darcy gave it to someone else. So I am a soldier now.



How wicked! Why would he do such a thing?

He *really* dislikes me! Maybe it is because his father was very fond of me.

What kind of girl is his sister?



Just like her brother! When she was a child, we were friends. Now she is fifteen or sixteen—pretty, important, and she means nothing to me!



I wonder how Darcy and Mr. Bingley can be good friends. Bingley is so kind!

POCKET CLASSICS

The card game ended. Mr. Collins stood next to Elizabeth.



I am so sorry you lost your money!

Please don't worry! Thanks to Lady Catherine de Bourgh, five shillings isn't much money to me!



Is your family friendly with Lady Catherine de Bourgh?

Not at all! She has just made my cousin the minister of a church on her land.



She is Mr. Darcy's aunt! Her daughter will be very rich, and she just might marry Darcy.

That will not make Miss Bingley happy!

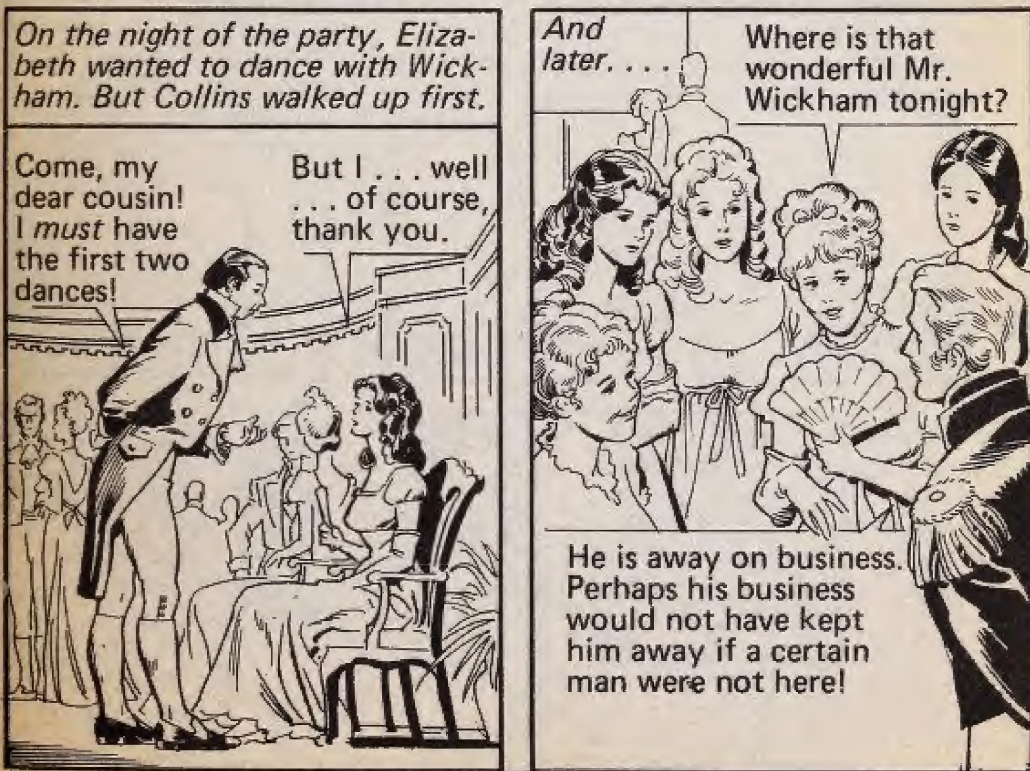


Pride and Prejudice

The party was over and the guests went home. The next day, the Bennets had visitors.



On the night of the party, Elizabeth wanted to dance with Wickham. But Collins walked up first.



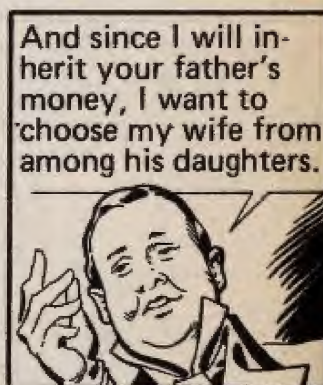
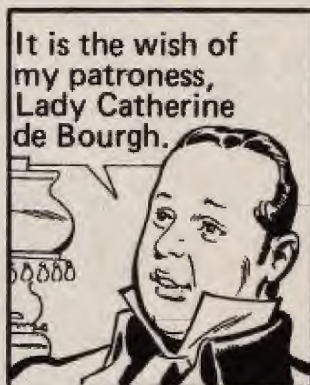
POCKET CLASSICS

Elizabeth could see that Mr. Collins was looking at her. And the next day. . . .



But Mrs. Bennet and Kitty hurried away.

Almost as soon as I entered the house I wanted to marry you. But first I will give you my reasons.

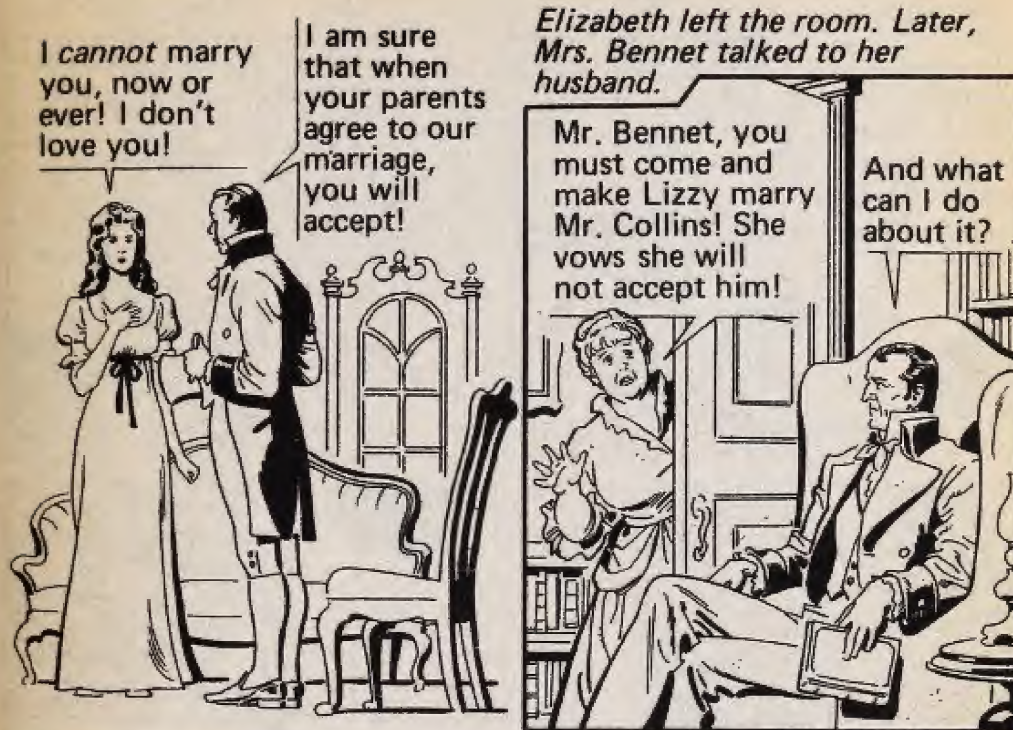


He talked on and on. At last Elizabeth was able to speak.

Elizabeth



Pride and Prejudice



Elizabeth came to the reading room.



POCKET CLASSICS

Mrs. Bennet was upset with Mr. Bennet and Elizabeth. When Charlotte Lucas came to visit, she heard all about it.



She always wants to have her own way! But if you refuse every offer and never get a husband, who will take care of you when your father is dead?



Pride and Prejudice

Then Mr. Collins himself entered.



The way your daughter acts has made me wish to take back my offer of marriage.

Oh, Mr. Collins!



After talking to Mrs. Bennet, he turned to Charlotte.

Thank you, we are all well.

My dear Miss Lucas, how is your health? And are your father and mother well?



POCKET CLASSICS

That afternoon a letter came for Jane. When she and Elizabeth were alone, she opened it.

It is from Caroline Bingley. The Bingleys and the Darcys have returned to London, and she says they don't want to come back!

Perhaps *she* doesn't want her brother to return. *He* may not feel that way!



She writes that they expect to see much of Darcy's sister, Georgiana, this winter.



Caroline says she is beautiful, and that Charles thinks she is wonderful.



Their family wants and expects them to be engaged.



I believe she knows my feelings for Charles. She is warning me that there is no hope for us.



That's silly! She sees that Charles is in love with you. We are not rich enough or important enough for *her*!

Pride and Prejudice



POCKET CLASSICS

In a short time they were making plans.



My dear Miss Charlotte, name the day that will make me a happy man!

Let us talk with my parents.

The next day Mr. Collins left for home. Charlotte, who was very friendly with Elizabeth, went to tell her the news.

You? Engaged to Mr. Collins? My dear Charlotte, impossible!

Did you think he wouldn't marry anyone else because he didn't get you?



I am twenty-seven years old. I don't care about love. All I ask for is a nice home.



I believe my chances of happiness with Mr. Collins are good.

My dear Charlotte, I wish you all the happiness in the world!



Pride and Prejudice

Mrs. Bennet was very upset when she heard the news about Charlotte.



To think that I must live to see the day when Charlotte Lucas will own my home!

Cheer up, my dear. Perhaps I may be the last to die.

It's all your fault, Elizabeth. You are a wicked, selfish girl!



It would be a week before Mrs. Bennet could see Elizabeth without getting angry. And it would be a month before she could speak to the Lucases without being rude.

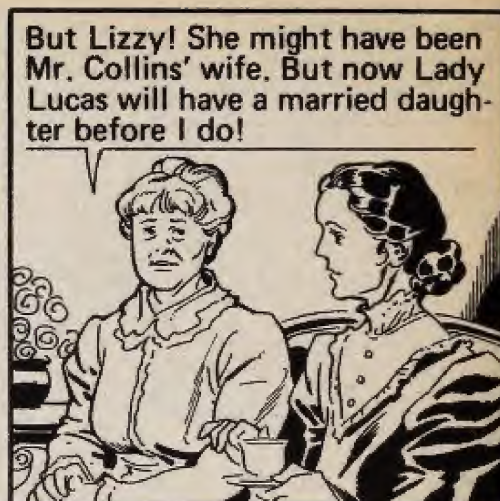
It was lucky that Mrs. Bennet's brother and his wife, the Gardiners, came to spend Christmas with her.

Can you believe it? Two of my girls were almost engaged, but now there is no hope!



I am sorry!

POCKET CLASSICS



Mrs. Gardiner and the two girls were good friends. So the older woman spoke to Elizabeth.



Pride and Prejudice

Many dances took place while the Gardiners were visiting.

Who is the young man giving so much attention to Elizabeth?

That's Mr. Wickham! Isn't he handsome?



After the dance, Mrs. Gardiner spoke to Lizzy.

My dear, Wickham is very handsome, but he doesn't have any money! I think you are too smart for that!

For what? To fall in love with a young man too poor to marry me?



I know it would not be wise. But he is one of the nicest men I know.



POCKET CLASSICS

But soon Wickham was thinking of someone else.



Not long afterward, Jane went to London with the Gardiners. The Collins-Lucas wedding day drew near. Charlotte paid a farewell visit to her friend Elizabeth.



Pride and Prejudice

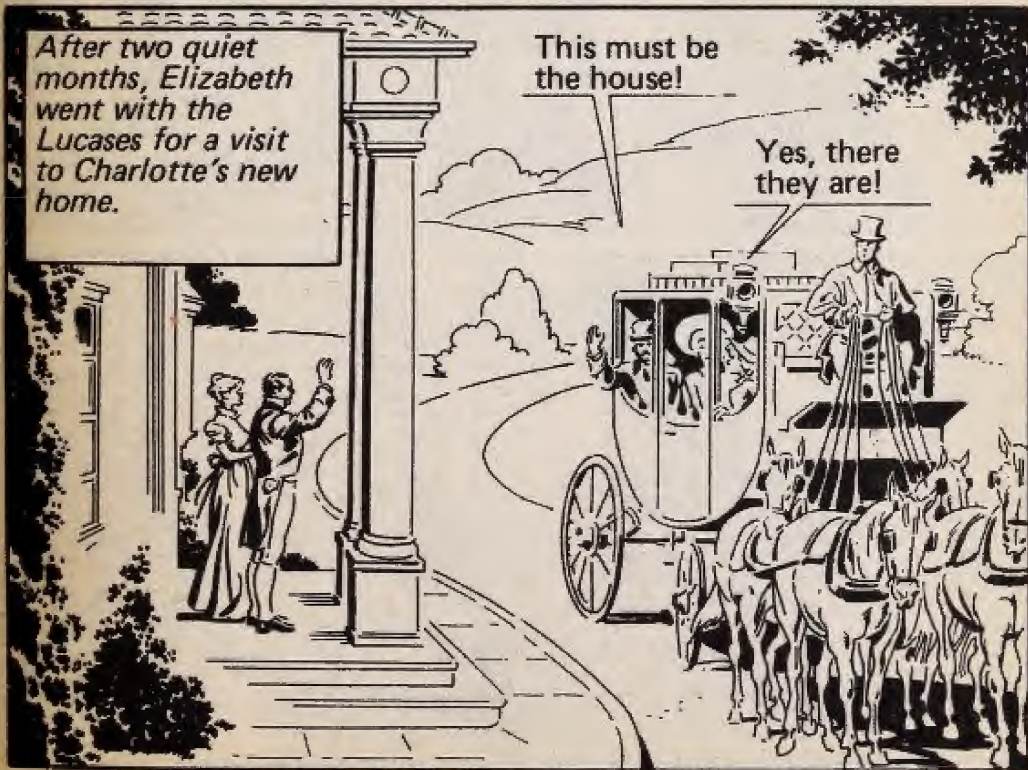
Soon, the wedding took place. The happy couple went from the church door directly to Kent.



After two quiet months, Elizabeth went with the Lucases for a visit to Charlotte's new home.

This must be the house!

Yes, there they are!



POCKET CLASSICS

First the guests were welcomed. Then Charlotte took them to see all the rooms of the house and the land around it.



There is Rosings, Lady Catherine de Bourgh's country home. Isn't it beautiful!

You will see Lady de Bourgh on Sunday at church, Miss Elizabeth.



I am sure she will invite you and Maria to many events while you are here.



She is very nice to us. We eat at Rosings twice a week, and she always has her coach bring us home!



The next day Elizabeth heard a great deal of talking.



Quick! Hurry down to the dining room. There is something I want you to see!

Pride and Prejudice

The girls looked through the dining room window.



It is Miss de Bourgh! I didn't think she would be so small and thin.

She is very rude to keep Charlotte out in all this wind.



She looks sickly and mean. She will make a good wife for Mr. Darcy!



The old lady is Mrs. Jenkinson, who lives with them.

The ladies drove on. Mr. Collins explained their visit.



How very lucky for you! Lady Catherine has invited our whole group to dine with her tomorrow!

The dinner was as good as Mr. Collins had promised. Lady Catherine did most of the talking.



What? Four sisters at home, and no governess? If I had known your mother, I would have told her to hire one!

I'm sure you would!

POCKET CLASSICS

Soon Sir William went home, leaving Maria and Elizabeth for a longer visit. And there were visitors at Rosings too.

Lady Catherine's nephews are visiting her—Mr. Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam.

Oh, yes. We know Mr. Darcy.

Yes, indeed!

The girls were asked to come to Rosings. Colonel Fitzwilliam liked Elizabeth very much.

What are you saying to Miss Bennet, Fitzwilliam? Let me hear it!

We are talking about music. Miss Bennet will play the piano for me.



Elizabeth began to play. Soon Darcy moved to face her.

You want to scare me, Mr. Darcy, but I won't let you!

You don't believe that! I think you just enjoy saying things like that.



Pride and Prejudice

From then on, Fitzwilliam and Darcy often visited the Collins' home.

I can't understand it! Colonel Fitzwilliam laughs and talks and enjoys himself. But why does Darcy come?



He only sits and stares—and mostly at you, Elizabeth! I almost believe he's in love with you!

No chance of that! We don't agree about anything!



Yet one day, Darcy came to see Elizabeth when she was alone.

I have fought my feelings, but I can't get rid of them. I must tell you how much I love you!



You are not the wife I would have chosen. We are not suited for each other—but my feelings for you are so strong that I hope you will marry me.



You have not said one nice thing about me. Why don't you forget the whole thing!

Is that all you have to say to me?



POCKET CLASSICS

I have every reason to think badly of you! Would I accept the man who has spoiled the happiness of my dear sister? Can you deny it?

No! And I am sorry about it.



Wickham is poor. He's had problems, and it's all because of you!

So that is what you think. Thank you for explaining it to me!



I've had enough! Forgive me for taking up your time.



Elizabeth was too surprised and upset to think of anything else. And when she got up the next morning, she was still upset.

She went out, hoping a walk would calm her feelings. Outside, she saw Darcy again.

I have been waiting for you. Will you read this letter?



Pride and Prejudice

Handing it to her, Darcy quickly walked away.

"Do not be afraid—I will not repeat the things I said yesterday, but I *had* to write this letter. After reading it, you may understand things a little better.



It is true that I joined Bingley's sisters in trying to make him forget Jane.



I told Bingley that Jane didn't love him. And from what I can see, I don't think she does."



It's true—I told Jane that she hid her feelings *too well!*

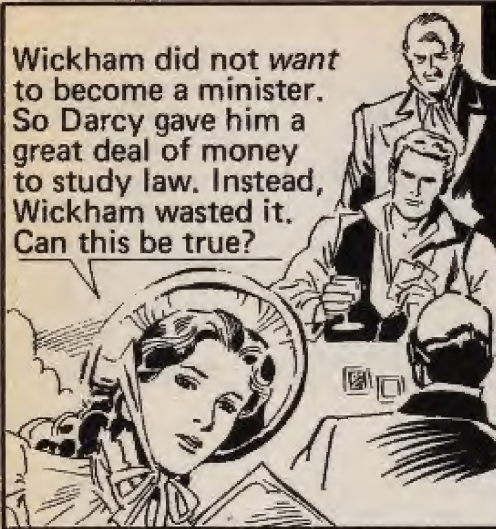


"As for Wickham, I can only tell you of the way he fooled my father and the way he treated my sister and me. Why don't you speak to Colonel Fitzwilliam who also knows the truth."



POCKET CLASSICS

Wickham did not want to become a minister. So Darcy gave him a great deal of money to study law. Instead, Wickham wasted it. Can this be true?



Then last summer, Wickham made plans with the lady who took care of Darcy's fifteen-year-old sister. He won Georgiana's love and asked her to run away with him. His reason for this was her money!



"At the last moment, she decided not to go through with it. Georgiana told me everything. Wickham quickly left the town. We didn't see him for a long time after that."



For two hours, Elizabeth walked. She could not believe it all. But still. . . .



I knew nothing about Wickham except that he said nice things to me. Darcy hurt my feelings. So I didn't like Darcy, and I believed everything Wickham said!



Pride and Prejudice

At last Elizabeth returned to the house.



Darcy and Fitzwilliam called to say goodbye. They leave tomorrow. It is too bad you missed them!

Then the time came for Elizabeth and Maria to leave. Jane joined them in London, and together they went home.



You look well, Jane!

I am glad you are back, Lizzy.

Once again the family was together.

Bad news! The soldiers are leaving Meryton in two weeks! But there's good news too—about a person we all like!



Mary King has moved to her uncle's house in Liverpool—so Wickham is safe from marrying her!

And Mary King is safe from him.



POCKET CLASSICS

Finally Elizabeth was alone with Jane and was able to share her secrets.

You don't blame me for not marrying Darcy?

Oh, no! But I am sorry that he is unhappy.



Then Elizabeth told Jane about Darcy's letter. But she didn't say anything about Bingley.

You see, I was wrong. But should we try to tell people what Wickham is really like?

Since he will leave with the soldiers in only two weeks, I wouldn't say anything!



Lydia and Kitty were broken-hearted that the soldiers were moving to Brighton.

Then Lydia received a note.

Mrs. Forster, the colonel's wife, invites me to go to Brighton with her! Oh, I am so happy!

What fun you will have!

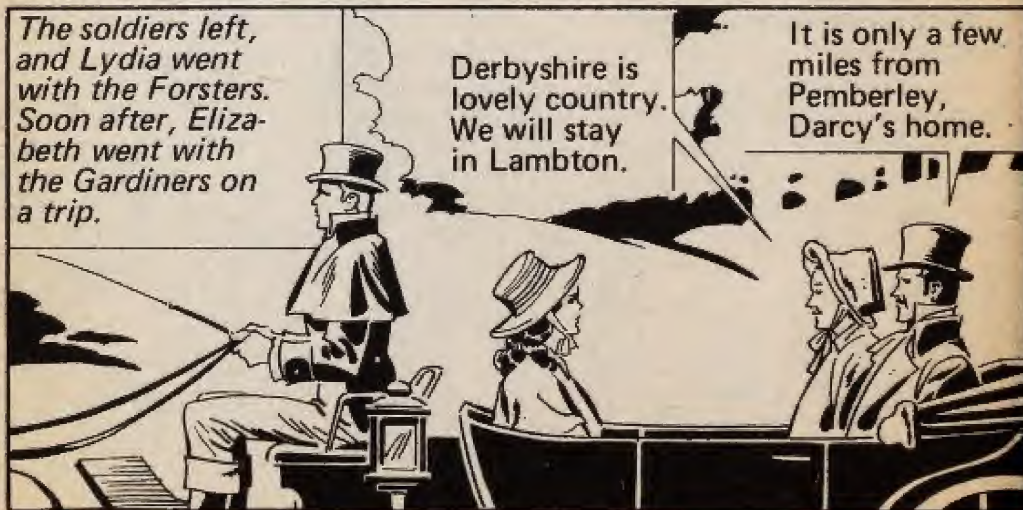
Why didn't Mrs. Forster ask me? I'm older than you are!



The soldiers left, and Lydia went with the Forsters. Soon after, Elizabeth went with the Gardiners on a trip.

Derbyshire is lovely country. We will stay in Lambton.

It is only a few miles from Pemberley, Darcy's home.



Pride and Prejudice



POCKET CLASSICS

A gardener was about to show them the grounds when suddenly. . .

Mr. Darcy! We thought you were not here!

I just arrived. I rode ahead of everyone else.



May I meet your friends?

Yes, of course.



Soon Darcy was showing them through the beautiful grounds.

If you are a fisherman, please fish here whenever you want!

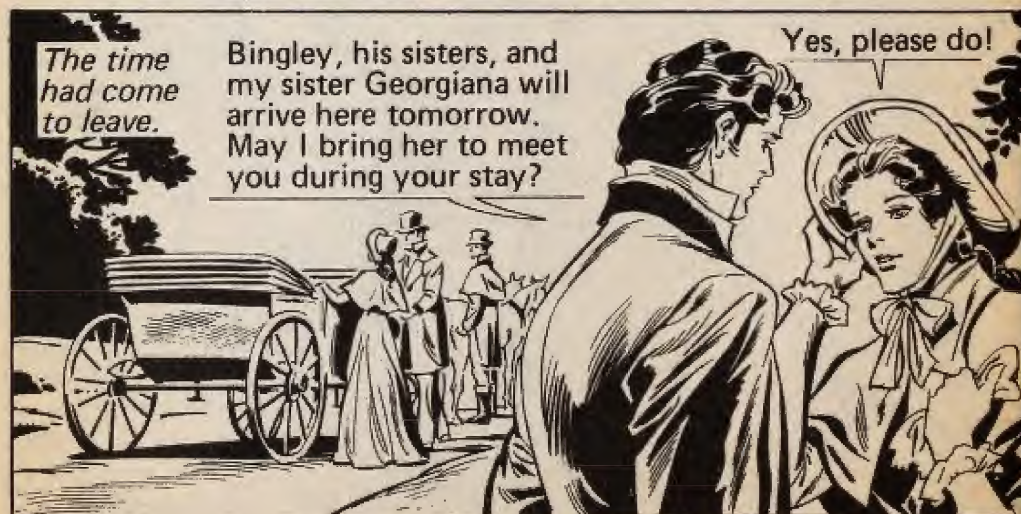
That's very kind!



The time had come to leave.

Bingley, his sisters, and my sister Georgiana will arrive here tomorrow. May I bring her to meet you during your stay?

Yes, please do!



Pride and Prejudice

As they drove home, Elizabeth didn't know what to think. What did it all mean? Darcy was like a different man!

The next day, Darcy arrived.

Please meet my sister, Georgiana.

How do you do!

Elizabeth soon knew that Georgiana was not proud, but only very shy!

Soon after that, Bingley arrived.

Miss Elizabeth! It has been more than eight months since I've seen any of your family! Are all your sisters well and still living at home?

If Bingley had counted the months since he last saw Jane, maybe he still loved her!

The visitors were asked to dine at Pemberley the next evening. And Elizabeth thought of Darcy most of the night.

I thought he would be my enemy. But it seems he has forgiven me for saying all of those mean things.

POCKET CLASSICS

The next morning . . .



Won't you come for a walk?

No, here's a letter from Jane. I want to read the news from home!

Elizabeth grew upset as she read.

It can't be true!
What shall I do!



Then Darcy entered the room.

Oh, my!
What is the matter?

Excuse me. I must find my uncle at once!



The servant will find him. Let me get you a glass of wine!

No, I am all right. I've just read a letter from Jane with terrible news.



Pride and Prejudice

My youngest sister, Lydia, has run away with Wickham! *You* know him! She has no money to make him want to marry her!



I might have stopped it if I had told my family what I knew about him!



I am so sorry. Are you *sure* about this?



Oh, yes! They left Brighton together secretly on Sunday night. They've been traced almost to London. My father has gone there, and Jane asks for my uncle's help.

We will start for home at once.



I wish I could help! I will tell my sister you've been called away, but I won't tell her why.

POCKET CLASSICS

The Gardiners returned to the house. The suitcases were packed quickly. Soon they were on their way home.

Maybe they are married! I cannot believe Wickham would be so cruel to Lydia!

Jane says Wickham's friend believes Wickham never wanted to marry her. He ran away because he owes people large amounts of money from gambling!



By the next day, Elizabeth and the Gardiners were in Longbourn.

Is there any news, Jane?

No. Father is in London and will not write again until there is news.

I will join him there tomorrow!



The next day Mr. Gardiner left for London. Two days later, a letter came from him.

They've been everywhere! There is not one sign of Lydia. Mr. Gardiner will send your father home and will carry on the search himself.

My poor Lydia!



Pride and Prejudice

Mr. Bennet returned home.
Soon after, a letter arrived.



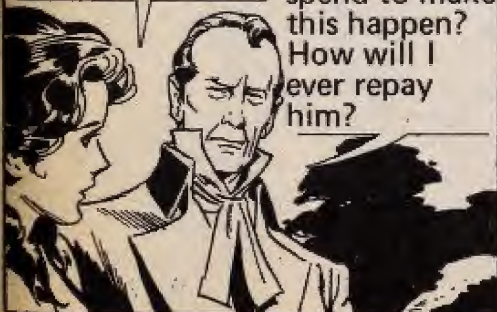
"They are not married, but they soon will be if you will give Lydia her equal share of your daughters' money. Wickham is better off than we thought."



"Lydia comes to stay with us today. She will be married in this house, if you agree."



You will agree? They ask only for the money Lydia is supposed to have!



You're right! Wickham would *never* marry Lydia for the small amount that is coming to her.



The money he owes will be paid, but he couldn't marry her for less than 10,000 pounds!

POCKET CLASSICS

The wedding took place at the Gardiners' home. Then the happy couple traveled to Longbourn.

Dear Lydia! Married at sixteen—and to this nice Mr. Wickham!

My sisters must wish they were in my place!

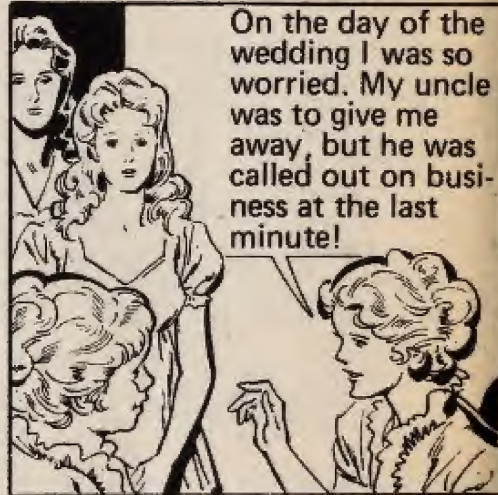


After listening to Lydia, Elizabeth kept her thoughts to herself.

I've come to love Darcy more than any man in the world. But he would *never* have Wickham as a brother-in-law. I must give up hope!



On the day of the wedding I was so worried. My uncle was to give me away, but he was called out on business at the last minute!

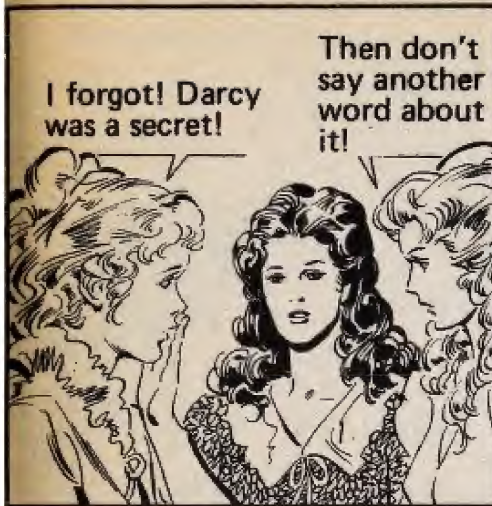


He came back in time. But Mr. Darcy would have done just as well. He was with Wickham.

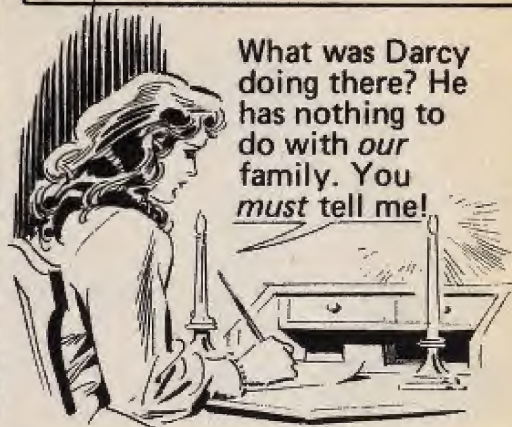


Darcy?

Pride and Prejudice

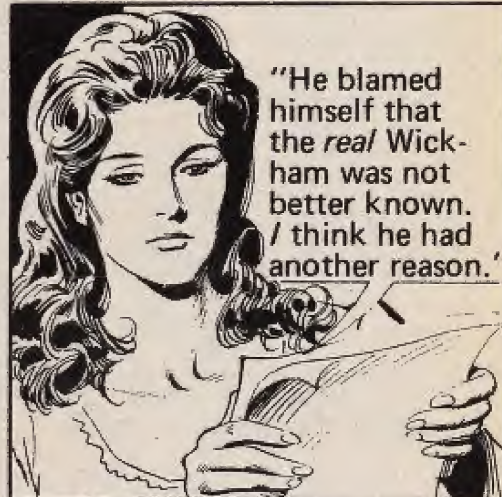


Later, Elizabeth wrote to her aunt.



Quickly an answer came.

My aunt writes that it was *Darcy* who went to London, found Wickham and Lydia, paid what Wickham owed, and showed him it was best to marry Lydia!



Soon Lydia and Wickham left for the army post. And other visitors arrived.



POCKET CLASSICS

*Bingley and Darcy came in.
Soon Bingley was seated next
to Jane.*



I have missed
seeing you!

*Bingley visited often after that.
Soon Elizabeth knew how he
felt about Jane.*



Oh! Ex-
cuse me!

We are going to
be married! I
am so happy!



I know you'll
agree that Jane's
the most won-
derful girl in
the world!

*A few days later, a coach
stopped at the Bennets' house.*



Lady
Catherine!

This is not just
a friendly visit!
I've come about
a terrible report
I've heard!

I've heard you
are to marry
my nephew,
Mr. Darcy!
That's impos-
sible! I want
him to marry
my daughter!

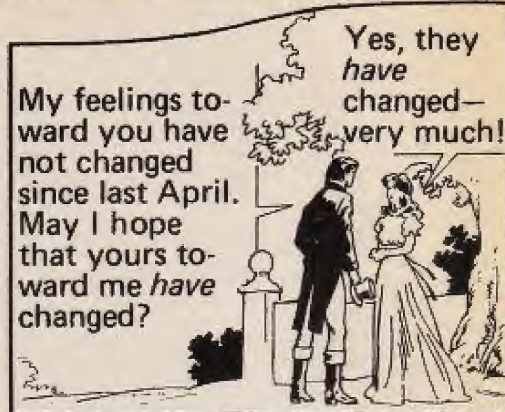
If that is your
only reason for
not wanting us
together—it is
not enough to
keep me from
accepting him.



Pride and Prejudice



Lady Catherine drove away angrily. Soon after, Darcy appeared.



So the day came when a happy Mrs. Bennet saw her two oldest daughters married to the right men.



THE END

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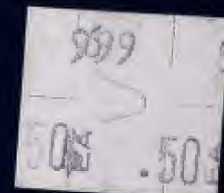
Pride and Prejudice

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